PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

November 22nd, 1899.—W. Whitaker, B.A., F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

The following communication was read:—

'On some Remarkable Calcisponges from the Eocene Tertiary Strata of Victoria (Australia).' By George Jennings Hinde, Ph.D., F.R.S., F.G.S.

The greater number of the sponges described were discovered by Mr. T. S. Hall, M.A., of Melbourne University, in incoherent detrital beds of Eocene age, in the southern part of Victoria; a few were picked out of some washings of fragmental polyzoa from the same district and horizon, by Mr. B. W. Priest. Some of the specimens are in an extremely perfect condition, and their structural details are as distinctly shown as in recent sponges. They are also of more than local interest in that they are the first fossil forms described of a group of calcisponges, the Lithonina, characterized by the peculiar aberrant forms of some of the spicules, and the mode in which they are closely fitted and organically fused together to form the skeletal mesh. This structure has, so far, only been recognized in one recent species, *Petrostroma Schulzei*, Döderlein, from the Japanese Sea.

The sponges are small, unattached, with a glassy, firm, resistant skeleton, calling to mind that of siliceous Lithistida. They are built up of a great variety of spicular forms, some are simple rods, with three- and four-rayed spicules, similar to those in recent calcisponges; but the majority are aberrant four-rayed forms, with three of the rays curved and with obtuse or expanded ends which are clasped, and fused as well, to the surfaces of adjacent spicules. The connected spicules form continuous anastomosing or radial fibres resembling those in the fossil Pharetrones, to which they are in some other respects similar, and it is probable that the spicules in the fibres of some members of this family were likewise organically cemented together. The common *Porosphaera* from the Upper Chalk, generally regarded as Hydrocorallines allied to the recent *Millepora*, are also closely related to the above sponges, and the Author hopes shortly to publish the evidence for their affinity to this group.

The Victorian sponges are placed in four new species, belonging to three genera: two of these are new, the other, *Bactronella*, Hinde, was founded on some peculiar calcisponges of Jurassic Age, now known to be Lithonine in character.

December 6th, 1899.—W. Whitaker, B.A., F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

The following communication was read:—

'On the Geology and Fossil Corals and Echinids of Somaliland.' By Dr. J. W. Gregory, F.G.S.

British Somaliland consists of a high plateau, of which the northern scarp is separated from the Gulf of Aden by a belt of low hills and plains known as the Guban. The southern plateau

consists of Archæan gneisses, quartzites, amphibolite-schists, chloritic schists, and pegmatites. It is capped by purple grits, red sandstones, and conglomerates, which are covered by limestones of Neocomian, Turonian (? Cenomanian), and Eocene ages. The Neocomian limestone, which may be correlated with that of Singeli described by Rochebrune, occurs at Dobar in the Guban; while a Jurassic limestone, probably of Bathonian date, occurs at Bihendula in the Guban. Fossils collected from these limestones and from raised reefs of Pleistocene age, by Mr. and Mrs. Lort Phillips, Miss Gillet, Mr. G. P. V. Aylmer, Capt. E. T. Marshall, and Mr. F. B. Parkinson, have been examined by the author, who tabulates a list of corals and echinids. One new genus and fourteen new species of corals are described, belonging to the genera *Stylophora*, *Stylina*, *Columnastræa*, *Prionastræa*, *Favia*, *Metethmos*, *Cyclolites*, and *Litharæa*, and one new species of *Pseudodiadema*. The evidence of the collections is sufficient to show that a Neocomian limestone occurs both on the summit of the Somali plateau and on the floor of the Guban, and that some marine limestones of Lower Tertiary age (probably Eocene) also occur on the plateau. It is therefore evident that the foundering of the Aden Gulf is post-Eocene in age.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A Question of Nomenclature.

To the Editors of the Annals and Magazine of Natural History.

Gentlemen,—I greatly regret to have again to intrude on your space with regard to a question of nomenclature.

I learn to my regret that this island is not the only part of Europe that harbours the pious priority-purist; a German ornithologist has, I am informed, proposed to apply the word *Apus* to the Swift!

What justification he can find in the numerous tomes that have been written about birds I know not, and do not seek to know.

I have, however, to submit that *Apus*, both by law and prescription, belongs to the freshwater crustacean that has for a century and a half been known by that name: for it was called ἄπους by Frisch in 1732; this was adopted in 1756 by Schäfer, who, on p. 131 of his 'Krebsartige Kiefenfüsse,' speaks of *Apus pisciformis*. I submit that Schäfer's generic name stands on an equality with those of Brisson or Artedi, which are expressly named in the note to law 2 of the British Association rules.

But I should like to go further. A law or a process which leads to the changing of so well-known a name is an abuse to good sense, and serves to bring our science into disrepute.

Your faithful Servant,

April 11, 1900. F. Jeffrey Bell.

P.S.—I am reminded that Scopoli (Introd. Hist. Nat. 1777, p. 404) speaks of the genus *Apos* for *Monoculus apus*, Linn., and on p. 483 of *Apus* for *Hirundo apus*, Linn. That after the knowledge of this obvious misprint a priority-purist should continue to insist that the name of the Swift is *Apus* makes me regret my epithet of pious, and inclines me to one of a very different significance.